

Anglicans receive national award

Church leans into the positive

New column looks at property



# The Anglican

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## Services lift hearts

**INSPIRING,** wonderful, heartfelt and deeply moving.

That's how Bishop Andrew Asbil described the first two Lift Up Our Hearts services, held at St. James Cathedral and Trinity, Streetsville in March. Hundreds of Anglicans attended in person and watched online.

The services, the first of five that will be held around the diocese this year, featured stirring music, inspiring preaching and lay testimonies, the opportunity to receive prayers and anointing with oil at Communion, and refreshments afterwards.

"It was wonderful to see Anglicans come from across the diocese, compelled to be there just to worship, to be present, to praise God," said Bishop Asbil. "I think there is a spiritual awakening among us. We understand how important our faith journey is and that we need each other as communities."

The services are part of the diocese's Season of Spiritual Renewal, an effort to refresh the spiritual lives of Anglicans after the pandemic years.

For more photos and stories from the services at the cathedral and Trinity, see pages 6-7.



# Three to receive national award

BY STUART MANN

**GROWING** up in a rectory next to the church in Cranbrook, B.C., Suzanne Rumsey got a close-up look at the human condition.

In a biography that she is writing about her late father, the Rev. Gavin Rumsey, she includes a section on "The Parade at the Door," the endless stream of people in need who wanted to speak to "the reverend."

That experience and others led

her to a life of service, she says. "You don't realize it at the time, but I think that's where my commitment comes from."

Ms. Rumsey, Nancy Hurn and Teresa Mandricks – all from the Diocese of Toronto – have been chosen to receive this year's Anglican Award of Merit, the Anglican Church of Canada's highest award for lay people.

Canon Ian Alexander of the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets

and Jane Osler of the Diocese of New Westminster will also receive the award. Canon Alexander helped the Diocese of Toronto create its strategic plan, Cast the Net.

Ms. Rumsey, a member of Redeemer, Bloor St., has worked for Alongside Hope (formerly PWRDF) for many years on a variety of issues, including food security, care for refugees, climate action and reconciliation.

Prior to joining Alongside Hope, she served with the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America, supporting the human rights of Indigenous peoples in Latin America. She worked with communities in Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas at times of unrest and assisted with a visit by Anglican bishops to an Indigenous village when bodies of villagers were returned. She also served on the World Council of Churches' commission on the churches' participation in development.

She says she was completely surprised by the award. "I think it's a validation of the work of human rights, international development and justice education, which are the three areas of work I've done for three and a half decades. It's so important that the award exists because there are so many people who do such good ministry in the Church."

Nancy Hurn, a lifelong member of St. Matthew, Islington, was General Synod's archivist for 14 years, playing a key role in digitizing the archives' database to make it accessible online. She was also



Nancy Hurn



Teresa Mandricks



Suzanne Rumsey

instrumental in making archival records available to researchers and survivors of the Residential Schools.

A believer in the healing power of archival records, she organized displays and interacted with participants at meetings across Canada, educating the public about the Residential Schools and making photographs and other records available for the benefit of Indigenous people.

"Understanding the faith of the Indigenous people has been a gift to me and has changed the direction of my life," she says. "Their care for the land and care for each other is such a Christian way of life, and there's lots to learn from them."

Ms. Hurn has volunteered with the Toronto Urban Native Ministry and is the chair of the Indigenous working group in her parish. She is also a facilitator of Mapping the Ground We Stand On, a workshop that explores the Indigenous pres-

ence and settler arrival on the map of Canada/Turtle Island.

Born in Nairobi, Teresa Mandricks came to Canada in 1989 and worked as the program assistant in General Synod's Indigenous Ministries department. In that role, she supported the work of Indigenous ministries, gatherings of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and of the Sacred Circle for three and a half decades. She was essential to the planning of the logistics of the Sacred Circle, ensuring that participants arrived and departed safely and were made comfortable.

In an interview with the national newspaper, the *Anglican Journal*, Ms. Mandricks said she was surprised and humbled to learn she would receive the award, highlighting the support she has received from General Synod colleagues, bishops and others. "The support that I received from everybody around – and the elders, especially the Indigenous elders – really was very important to me," she said.

Archbishop Anne Germond, the acting Primate, planned to present the award to the recipients in their churches.

**Thursday 29th May at 6 p.m.**  
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He was recently appointed Chaplain of Wycliffe College.

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"Come away...and rest a while..." Mark 6:31

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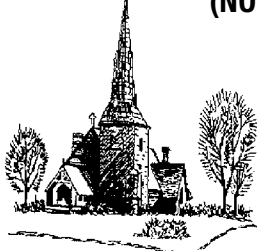
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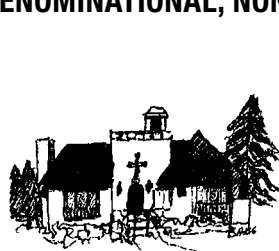
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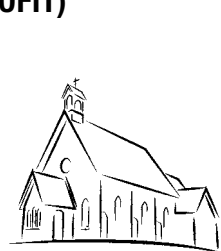
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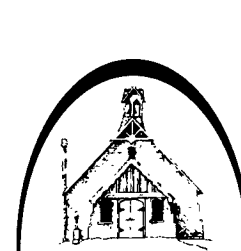
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# Church responds with hope and love

## Lament over state of world turns to action

BY THE REV. KAREN KOITER

EVERY other week, our staff team at Little Trinity spends some time in prayer that we take turns leading. A couple of months ago, this time of prayer was focused on how we were feeling about world events. What was our reaction to the rapid-fire changes in U.S. policy? How did we feel about the wars around the world? About the devastation wreaked by the sudden cutting of funding to so many vital aid organizations around the world?

In response to these questions, we found ourselves spending the majority of our time together not in prayer, but in lament and grief. We voiced our pain and anger at the injustices we saw. We raged at the way that unfair policies always seem to hurt the most vulnerable first. It felt good to be able to name it together, to say out loud how hard it was, and how frustrating and painful.

But gradually, as we spent time processing together, the question arose: beyond lament, beyond grief, what does a Christian response to these things look like? How do we respond to world events as followers of Jesus Christ? How do we proclaim the hope that we have? And how do we help the people in our churches do the same?

The result, born out of that staff meeting of lament and grief, was a challenge both to us and to our congregation. Because, as a wise staff member reminded us, as followers of Jesus, we are called to respond the way Christians have always been called to respond: in hope, in prayer, in speaking loving truth to power, in giving, in serving, and in laying down our lives for the other. In remembering that earthly powers are temporary and limited, and that we follow one who showed us a better way.

And so we decided to lean into the positive this Lent. What were the ways that we could respond that weren't just reacting in fear



Staff and Congolese refugees at the Nyarugushu Refugee Camp in Tanzania in 2023. At right, youth from Little Trinity take part in a kitchen makeover in Toronto for an organization that gives support and accommodations to new refugee claimants. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALONGSIDE HOPE AND LITTLE TRINITY

and frustration? How could we model a different way of being human: one that was not turning inward in self-protection or anger, but reaching out in hope and love?

Alongside Hope (formerly PWRDF) works closely alongside many organizations that have been affected by drastic funding cuts over the past few months. One particular place that has seen devastating cuts is the Nyarugushu Refugee Camp in Tanzania, run by Church World Service (CWS) and the Resettlement Support Center (RSC). This refugee camp is a temporary home to more than 180,000 people who have been fleeing from conflict, mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The indefinite suspension of refugee resettlement programs as a result of U.S. policy changes has affected thousands of families who were in advanced stages of refugee resettlement. At least 10 families had already liquidated their assets and were on their way to a new life in the States when they were informed that they would be returned to the camp and forced to start over, including having to re-apply for

food and shelter within the camps.

Alongside Hope has, in partnership with CWS, agreed to support these 10 identified families, raising \$5,000 for each family as they try to get back on their feet and in the programs in the camp. When we reached out to them to ask some of their current initiatives, we were invited to join in this response – a way to make a difference for a few people on the other side of the world who are most acutely feeling the effects of U.S. policy.

Our youth group had already planned to spend a part of their March Break on a service “trip” at home, sleeping at the church and spending their days visiting local shelters and ministries, hearing about the many ways that people are acting in loving and positive ways for those who live on the margins of society. One aspect of this time was to put together care packages for local shelters and refugee claimant homes. We also set a goal of raising \$1,000 towards these efforts.

Knowing how helpful it had been to have space as a staff team to grieve, to voice our anger and pain,



and to pray together, we decided to offer our congregation the same outlet. We held a Day of Prayer on April 5, along the theme of the Prayer of St Francis:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that I may  
not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born  
to eternal life.*

Different prayer stations were set up throughout the church, offering ways to pray for the most

vulnerable people in our society and our world, while also acknowledging the darkness and brokenness within our own hearts. As the Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas said in her beautiful sermon at the Lift Up Our Hearts service at Trinity, Streetsville, prayer lays the tracks that the power of God can roll down.

All of these different ways to respond are small drops in a very large bucket of need and hurt. But we pray that the God who took five loaves and two small fish can take this small offering of love and transform it into a sign of hope for a hurting world. Lord, have mercy.

*The Rev. Karen Koiter is an associate priest at Trinity East (Little Trinity).*

## BRIEFLY

### Symposium reflects on TRC calls

June will mark 10 years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada presented its 94 Calls of Action to Canada. On May 24, Redeemer, Bloor St. will host a gathering to reflect on reconciliation with Indigenous people, to learn about the progress in living out the Calls to Action, and to take practical steps in support of the calls. Speakers will include Douglas Sanderson of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in Manitoba and a University of Toronto law professor who is the Visiting Indigenous Scholar at Redeemer; Douglas Sinclair of the Peguis First Nation of Manitoba and publisher of the *Indigenous Watchdog*; and the Ven. Rosalyn Kantlaht'ant Elm, chaplain from Six Nations and director of Indigenous Ministries, Anglican Church of Canada. The symposium starts at 12 p.m. at the church, 162 Bloor St. W., Toronto. To register, go to <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/nz55rxj>.

## Newsletter delivers paper to inboxes

### Readers get new way to receive news and commentary

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

READERS of *The Anglican* now have another way to keep up with news and commentary from across the Diocese of Toronto. Starting with the April issue, a monthly email newsletter is delivering the latest issue of the paper straight to readers' inboxes, offering a convenient way to stay informed.

The newsletter is sent out the same day an issue is posted on *The Anglican's* website, [www.theanglican.ca](http://www.theanglican.ca). Each email includes a link to the most recent issue and highlights a few news stories or columns published that month. The goal is to make the diocesan newspaper more accessible to readers who

prefer digital formats or who may not always pick up a print copy.

“*The Anglican's* email newsletter gives readers more options about how they'd like to receive their news,” says Canon Stuart Mann, the paper's editor. “Many people appreciate the convenience of getting news on their phones or computers, and we hope it will encourage more engagement with the stories we publish.”

*The Anglican* has been expanding its digital presence in recent years. The paper launched its own website in 2022, with every news story and column posted as standalone content that is easily accessible, searchable and shareable. Since then, staff have added

individual posts for all news stories and columns dating back to the fall of 2014, along with PDFs of every issue since January 2007.

“*The Anglican's* website is a comprehensive news platform for the diocese, and it complements the printed paper really well,” says Canon Mann. “The new email newsletter builds on the digital expansion we've been seeing in the past few years.”

The newsletter also positions *The Anglican* for a future that may rely less on print to deliver news. Like all diocesan newspapers in Canada, Toronto's paper is printed and mailed with the *Anglican Journal*, the newspaper published by the Anglican Church of Canada.

Conversations about the future of the *Anglican Journal* – and whether to stop printing and mailing physical copies – have been ongoing for several years. The Council of General Synod voted in March to continue printing the *Journal* for at least the next three years.

“The print edition of *The Anglican* is still an important part of how we communicate with Anglicans across our diocese, and the email newsletter is just one more tool we can use to share the good news happening in our parishes,” says Canon Mann.

Anyone interested in receiving *The Anglican* by email each month can sign up at [www.theanglican.ca/subscribe](http://www.theanglican.ca/subscribe).



Bishop Andrew Asbil speaks at a press conference at Queen's Park along with other faith leaders last September after the Ontario government announced it would close 10 overdose prevention sites in the province. The diocese continues to press for the reinstatement of harm reduction services as part of a comprehensive approach to public health. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

## Majority of parishes support protection and expansion of harm reduction services



BY ELIN GOULDEN

This year's social justice vestry motion, "Protecting and Expanding Harm Reduction in Ontario," received the support of a majority of parishes across the diocese, as parishes considered the devastating impacts of the ongoing opioid overdose crisis. As of the time of this writing, 114 of 166 parishes, or 68.7 per cent, had passed the motion in some form. (We are still waiting to hear from a further 26 parishes whose parochial returns have not yet been uploaded.) Of those who passed the motion, more than 97 per cent retained the original wording urging the provincial government to reverse the planned closure of safe consumption sites and to reverse the ban on new sites, with or without additions.

The results of the motion are heartening, considering that this year's motion was somewhat more controversial than many past social justice motions. In the lead-up to the vestry motion campaign, some clergy and lay people expressed concern that the motion might be seen as "enabling" substance abuse. However, as parishes engaged with the motion and the materials provided by the Social Justice and Advocacy Committee, most came to see supporting harm reduction not as opposing treatment, but as offering a full continuum of care – indeed, providing an on-ramp for people who use drugs to access all sorts of health and other supports, including treatment. Several parishes made this connection explicit by adding language urging the province to increase access to addictions treatment along with protecting and expanding harm reduction services.

Another concern expressed early on was that this motion wouldn't gain traction outside Toronto, since the only sites in the diocese slated to be closed by the province's new legislation were in Toronto. In fact, over half of the parishes supporting the motion were located outside Toronto, and more parishes voted in favour of the motion in the Oshawa and Peterborough deaneries than in any other deanery. Anglicans clearly recognize that the overdose crisis affects people in communities of all sizes across Ontario, and that the ban on new super-

vised consumption sites means that people in communities without those life-saving services will continue to go without them.

One of the things that helped many parishes come to grips with the issues behind the motion was inviting a speaker on the topic. I made presentations at St. Martin, Bay Ridges, St. Martin in-the-Fields, Toronto, and St. Peter, Erindale. The Rev. Barbara Russell, a member of the Social Justice and Advocacy Committee, spoke at her home parish of St. George, Grafton and at St. John, Bowmanville. Andrew Neelands, a parishioner and volunteer at St. Stephen in-the-Fields, was invited to speak at Grace Church on-the-Hill, while Keren Elumir, a parishioner of Church of the Resurrection and a nurse at the Moss Park consumption and treatment site, made a presentation at St. James Cathedral. All those parishes ended up passing the motion. Several other parishes, including All Saints, Collingwood, expressed thanks for the video Q&A and other resources provided by the Social Justice and Advocacy Committee.

Not all parishes embraced the motion, of course. Some clergy admitted that they hadn't presented it this year, as they anticipated enough difficult discussions at vestry without adding the topic of harm reduction. A few parishes indicated that they had opened the topic for discussion but had decided not to put it to a vote.

That doesn't mean that the conversation stops. On March 6, about 50 people from different church denominations attended a discussion hosted by Little Trinity called "Faith With Substance," billed as a "theological and practical conversation about drug use and supervised consumption sites." The Rev. Angie Hocking, one of the event's organizers and presenters, described it as a success, saying it helped provide a safe space for people with concerns to have a theologically informed conversation about these issues.

"People said they learned a whole lot – new perspectives and things to consider that they had not known about before our evening together," she said. "There was an optional naloxone training at the end of the event, which most people stayed for and were eager to learn how to help save a life worthy of saving." Other parishes that have not passed the motion are also looking at

ways to learn more about the issues.

On March 28, Justice John Callaghan of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice granted an interim injunction allowing the 10 supervised consumption sites set to be closed by provincial legislation to remain open, pending his review of the Charter challenge to that legislation. In his decision, Justice Callaghan said the harm to users of the sites that could result from closures outweighed the harm to the public on a time-limited basis while he considers the Charter challenge. "It is foreseeable that many more will overdose, and some of those will die," he wrote.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Health said the ruling will not change the province's plans. Nine of the 10 sites had applied for funding to continue some of their operations under the province's new HART (Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment) hub model, and the province has made it clear that HART hub funding is contingent on the sites not seeking to continue offering supervised consumption services. In practice, those sites may not be able to continue functioning without provincial funding. The Kensington Market Overdose Prevention Site (KMOPS) will continue to operate on donations, as it has done since 2018.

The diocese continues to press for the reinstatement of harm reduction services as part of a comprehensive approach to public health. A template letter that can be used to advocate with the premier, the health minister and your local MPP can be found on the diocesan website at [www.toronto.anglican.ca/vestry-motion](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/vestry-motion).

While we are grateful for every parish that passed the motion, the success of the social justice vestry motion is not about how many parishes vote for it, but whether we as a diocese can have informed and faithful conversations about difficult issues facing our society. The opioid crisis is not something that happens to "those people over there." Many of us, our friends and family have been touched by this crisis in one way or another. Knowing that each person has inherent value and dignity in the eyes of God, may we seek together how we can bring life, not harm, for each of our neighbours.

*Elin Goulden is the diocese's social justice and advocacy consultant.*



### TheAnglican

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**Canon Stuart Mann:** Editor

Address all editorial material to:  
The Anglican  
135 Adelaide Street East  
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1L8  
Tel: 416-363-6021, ext. 247  
Toll free: 1-800-668-8932  
Fax: 416-363-7678  
Email: [editor@toronto.anglican.ca](mailto:editor@toronto.anglican.ca)

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# Welcome to Beyond the Bricks



Let's begin with a simple truth: our buildings don't just house ministry and mission – they're an essential part of them. They hold our stories, reflect our values, and stand as a witness to our faith.

Across the Diocese of Toronto, something is quietly shifting. Property is no longer seen as a burden or a backdrop, but as an active partner in the work God is calling us to do. It's not just about how we care for our spaces – it's about how we reimagine them as faithful, future-facing expressions of our shared mission.

Beyond the Bricks is part of our new communications strategy built to reflect that shift. This column is here to share what's unfolding, highlight what's working, and open new channels between you, our Property Resources team, and the communities we serve. Because this isn't about "reporting" or "complying" – it's about walking alongside.

## Property as a tool for transformation

When mission and property are aligned, our spaces become more than buildings – they become tools for transformation.

Over the past year, we've worked closely with the Congregational Development team to help parishes engage in strategic planning that connects ministry with property in practical, meaningful ways. Through this partnership, parishes have

## BEYOND THE BRICKS

BY MAC MOREAU

begun asking thoughtful, future-focused questions: What is God calling us to do in this place? Who are we called to serve? What kind of space does that require – and how can we use what we have in ways that support ministry, invite shared use and create opportunities to re-invest in the work we're called to do?

Done well, this work turns property into a pathway – not just something to manage, but something that helps communities grow and serve with intention.

## More than a column: a new way to connect

After Synod 2023, it became clear that we had an opportunity to strengthen how we communicate – to share more of what's happening, make resources easier to access, and better support those we serve. In response, we're making intentional changes – not just to improve communication, but to build stronger relationships and create more meaningful points of connection between parishes and the diocesan Property Resources team.

This renewed approach is grounded in the Priorities and Plans affirmed at Synod 2023, which continue to guide how we show up: deepening our role as trusted partners to parish leaders, making our systems more accessible and responsive,

and viewing property not as an obstacle, but as a tool for mission and ministry.

This work also aligns directly with Cast the Net, the diocese's strategic vision. We're responding to the needs of today's Church by resourcing lay leaders (call #11), supporting congregational health through sustainability and space use (call #15), strengthening relationships across the diocese (call #16), reimagining leadership and decision-making (call #17), and embracing a missional approach to property (call #18).

Together, these commitments reflect a deeper shift – one that's reshaping how we walk with parishes, how we steward our shared resources, and how we live out our mission as a Church, together.

## Part of a bigger picture

This column is just one piece of a wider effort to connect more intentionally with parishes across the diocese. Here are a few other initiatives we're excited to share:

- **The Property Post:** Launching before summer 2025 and led by Pam Boisvert, this new subscriber-based e-newsletter will feature good news stories, timely updates and practical tools to support your work.
- **Website revamp:** Under the leadership of Daiane Monteiro, we're overhauling the property pages on the diocesan website to make them clearer, more user-friendly and easier to navigate.
- **Workshops & info sessions:** The Prop-

erty Resources team will continue to host quarterly gatherings for parish leaders, focusing on practical topics like optimizing space, capital planning and property stewardship.

- **Regular Bulletin Board updates:** Keep an eye on the diocesan bi-weekly Bulletin Board for ongoing updates, reminders and invitations from our team.

At the heart of these initiatives is a simple goal: to be more present, more accessible and more responsive to the realities you're facing in your ministry.

## Let's keep the conversation going

This column isn't just about what we're doing – it's about why it matters. It's about parishes reimagining what's possible, communities finding new life in familiar places, and ministry rooted in sacred, shared space.

Whether you're a churchwarden navigating a capital project, a priest discerning new ministry possibilities within the limits of your space, or a lay leader exploring an emerging property strategy, this work is ultimately about creating space: for ministry to grow, for communities to connect, and for the Church to live more fully into its calling. And wherever that journey takes you, we're here to walk with you.

Welcome to Beyond the Bricks. We're so glad you're here.

*Mac Moreau is the director of Property Resources for the diocese.*

# Jesus became one of us



BY MURRAY MACADAM

Our recent celebration of Easter inspires us to think about God taking on human form through Jesus, whose death on the cross and

subsequent resurrection offers us the promise of new life.

But what if we move beyond a narrow focus on the resurrection and instead contemplate the full implications of Jesus' life and ministry? In particular, can his life offer some lessons for our current context, especially if we focus on Jesus' humanity?

It's easy to overlook the similarities between Jesus' life and times and ours, and how Jesus participated in our common humanity. First, Jesus had four brothers – James, Joses, Judas and Simon – as well as sisters who are not named (Mark 6:3), so it's very likely that Jesus helped at home with caring for his siblings, which might explain how comfortable he was with children during his ministry.

As the son of a carpenter who passed on his trade, Jesus was very familiar with the world of hard work. In a society where

most land was owned by the Romans and their aristocratic associates, Jesus' family probably did some small-scale farming or kept a large garden to help feed the family. Many of the parables, such as the parables of the sower and of the mustard seed (Mark 4:1-34), indicate that Jesus knew about farming practices.

Jesus shared in the other challenges of everyday life that many others in his society also faced. Like them, Jesus had to get around on foot, in a largely harsh, hot desert land.

Another similarity between Jesus' life and ours is that he experienced the full range of human emotions, even if he experienced them in different circumstances from us. During the crucifixion, Jesus experienced intense physical pain, emotional agony and a profound sense of abandonment, culminating in the cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Jesus experienced strong emotions at other times as well. We're familiar with the anger he felt when expelling the merchants and money changers from the temple (Matthew 21:12-13). He could also be troubled and deeply moved, such as

with Mary of Bethany's grief over Lazarus (John 11:33). He was anxious at other times, and he even wept (John 11:35).

It's significant that God became a human not among the upper-class elite of his time but as a member of the lower class, among people living under an enemy occupation. Jesus then chose other people from the working class of that society, such as fishermen and a tax collector, to become part of his counter-cultural movement, one that aimed to turn that oppressive society upside down. Confronting Roman military occupation was an act of immense courage and faith.

Could we be called to do likewise? That is, to show similar courage and faith in responding to the challenges we face in our society, instead of feeling powerless and pessimistic about our capacity to effect change?

Theologian Walter Brueggemann notes in his poem "On Reading Samuel:"

*In a flash, it may dawn on us:  
You call and designate people like us,  
your agents.  
Kingdoms rage...and we are called;  
Empires tremble...and we are designated...*

*Us vulnerable, frail, anxious, your people.*

What an invitation!

It's an invitation that can give us fresh hope at a time when many of us are not feeling hopeful but rather discouraged and disempowered, given the political and economic turmoil of our times.

The more we accept the humanity of Jesus and that he experienced a gamut of emotions, as most of us do, the more we can identify with him. His teachings, and their potential to empower us to take on the challenges before us, become even more compelling.

Reflecting on the kind of life Jesus led enables us to see that God became human through Jesus in order to show us how to live. He modeled a way of being that can enable us to rise above our human fears and frailties. Jesus shows us that there is much more to being human than the everyday circumstances in which we find ourselves. That's an important lesson in these anxious times.

*Murray MacAdam is a member of All Saints, Peterborough.*



Photo adapted from Fizkes/Shutterstock

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# Service feeds hearts, minds, souls

## Church urged to be its churchiest in troubling time

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

**F**eed me till I want no more!" So sang a congregation of about 350 Anglicans gathered at St. James Cathedral in March to worship God together in a service that fed hearts and minds and souls.

March 22 marked the first of five "Lift Up Our Hearts" services being held around the diocese on Saturday afternoons in 2025 as part of the Season of Spiritual Renewal.

"There's no reason why you can't come to all five," Bishop Andrew Asbil remarked in his welcome at the start of the service.

At least two parishes hired buses to carry their members downtown, while many others arrived by car, subway and streetcar from across the city of Toronto and beyond. People mingled in the aisles and waved across pews before the service, greeting friends from other parishes. The service was also live streamed on YouTube to allow for hybrid worship.

"This is an opportunity for us as a diocesan family to come together, to meet people we have not met before, to be reminded that we are all one family in faith; an opportunity for us to sow hope into the world; and an opportunity for us to be reminded that we are not just the Church of yesterday, not just the Church for today, but for tomorrow," said Bishop Asbil.

A talented group of instrumentalists and vocalists from many different parishes led the congregation in music that ranged from the 18th to the 21st centuries. The diocese's bishops led those who attended in renewing their baptismal covenant, and everyone had the opportunity to receive prayers and anointing with oil at Communion.

The readings from scripture all touched on the theme of spiritual renewal. The congregation heard the story of Ezekiel prophesying to the dry bones, as well as Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples.

In her sermon, the Rev. Molly Finlay, incumbent of St. John the Baptist, Norway, set the idea of spiritual renewal in the context of the world the present-day Church finds itself in.

"Our calling, our vocation, just got a whole lot more urgent, and it seems to have happened almost overnight. We are not playing here. There are forces of darkness at work in the world in a way that I have not witnessed in my lifetime. There are very public and vocal voices twisting the truth of the gospel into something that it is not," she said.

The Church, she went on, is being called to be its churchiest.

"The darkness will never, ever overshadow the light, but it is going to take all of us little Christs to be fully reconstituted, spirit-filled bodies using our prophetic voices to speak out against tyranny, our bones fully joined, our souls and bodies alive and kicking," she said. "Renewal is no longer an option. It's now what we are going to beg for with every ounce of energy we may or may not have left, so we can be the freedom fighters for justice and peace, love and mercy, that God calls each and every one of us to be."

After the sermon and a piece of reflec-



Clergy and laity from St. John, Willowdale arrive by van. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON



The Rev. Molly Finlay encourages Anglicans to speak out against tyranny in her homily.



Jennafer Da Silva tells her story of faith.

tive music, Jennafer Da Silva, a lay member of St. John the Baptist, Norway, spoke about her own story of faith that led her to join that community in 2022 after a time of upheaval in her life.

"The St. John's community was truly an answer to my prayers. It felt like a miracle to be sitting next to my parents in church every Sunday," she said. "Throughout my separation and divorce, I depended on God when I had no one else to turn to. I needed Him so desperately, and He was there for me."

After the service, members of the congregation lingered over food and drink served in the side aisles, reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones as some groups took photos of their parish



The Rev. Canon Rob Mitchell and parishioners of St. Olave, Swansea in their pews. PHOTO BY THE REV. CANON ROB MITCHELL



Instrumentalists and vocalists from different parishes lead the congregation in music.



Bishops Andrew Asbil, Riscylla Shaw and Kevin Robertson administer Communion.

contingents visiting the cathedral.

The inaugural Lift Up Our Hearts service was followed by a second event on March 29 at Trinity, Streetsville with the Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas preaching.

The remaining three services will take place on May 31 at All Saints, Whitby with

the Rev. Gerlyn Henry preaching; on Sept. 27 at St. James, Orillia with the Rev. Dr. Rob Hurkmans preaching; and on Oct. 25 at St. Paul, Bloor Street with the Rev. Dr. Alvarado Adderly preaching. Visit [www.toronto.anglican.ca/spiritualrenewal](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/spiritualrenewal) for more details.

# Homilist looks forward to sharing on Tik Tok

The Rev. Gerlyn Henry is looking forward to not only preaching at the next Lift Up Our Hearts service at All Saints, Whitby on May 31 but sharing parts of it with her online community afterwards.

Rev. Henry, incumbent of Holy Wisdom, Toronto, has 53,000 followers on Tik Tok, the social media platform for creating and sharing short videos. Each week, she posts a brief clip about her life as a priest and matters of faith.

“Engaging with people online about faith has been such a gift,” she says. “I’m hoping the Lift Up Our Hearts service in May will not only be a time of spiritual renewal for our diocese but that elements of it shared online will be powerful and impactful for people around the world.”



The Rev. Gerlyn Henry

She plans to promote the service on her Tik Tok account leading up to the service but says the real engagement will probably happen afterwards, when people see and hear snippets of it and want to comment and discuss it with her. “I think people will respond really well to it,” she says.

The service, one of five that are being held around the diocese during the Season of Spiritual Renewal, will be in-person and livestreamed. It will begin at 2 p.m. All are invited to attend.

Rev. Henry, who has been the incumbent of Holy Wisdom for three years, says she was surprised to be asked to preach at the service. She had also planned to attend the Lift Up Our Hearts services in March at St. James Cathedral and Trinity, Streetsville.

“I’m a little nervous but I’m also excited,” she says. “I feel I’m still so new to the diocese, so this will be a cool opportunity to not only see my colleagues but also parishioners of the diocese in ways I haven’t had the opportunity to.”

She says going to different churches and attending different worship services is a way of renewing one’s spiritual life. “I think sometimes parishioners and priests feel siloed in their particular churches and traditions. But when we go out and experience different styles of preaching and music and hear the word of God from different interpreters, that can bring a renewal of spirit.”

And it’s an excellent time for the Lift Up Our Hearts services, she adds. “At this time of political and social unrest, we need to focus a little bit on how we’re going to survive and thrive while we care for our neighbours, so these services couldn’t have come at a better time.”

Stuart Mann

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Hannah Whitehouse from Grace Church in Scarborough sings *Amazing Grace*, accompanied by Libby McGrath, worship director at Trinity, Streetsville, before the start of the Lift Up Our Hearts service at Trinity. PHOTO BY STUART MANN



The Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas preaches.



Bishop Riscylla Shaw with friends at the reception after the service.

# Weather no match for God

## Faithful fill church for uplifting service on icy day

BY STUART MANN

A blast of icy rain couldn’t keep about 400 Anglicans from travelling to Trinity, Streetsville at the end of March for the diocese’s second Lift Up Our Hearts service.

People were slow to arrive, but by the time the service started the big church was full and people were ready to forget the weather and spend the next two hours experiencing God.

And they weren’t disappointed. By the time Trinity’s worship band completed the first two songs of the afternoon, God’s presence was palpable. Every part of the service was infused with a warm, hope-filled energy that left many people wanting more.

Before the service started, singer Hannah Whitehouse of Grace Church in Scarborough and Libby McGrath, the worship director at Trinity, performed “Amazing Grace,” setting the tone for all that followed.

The leadup to the service also included a live interview with the Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Paulsen, coordinator of the diocese’s Season of Spiritual Renewal. The interview, conducted in the narthex by Kyla Lohnes, Trinity’s online engagement director, was shown on the church’s large screens and online.

In his opening remarks, Bishop Andrew

Asbil thanked Trinity, Streetsville and those in attendance. “Whether you’re present in the house or present online, your presence means so much to us,” he said.

The service’s uplifting music was matched by heartfelt prayers, readings, a sermon and a lay testimonial.

In her sermon, the Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas, incumbent of St. Paul on the Hill, Pickering, spoke about God’s faithfulness and the ways that people can be faithful to God in return. “There is no controlling or manufacturing the work of the Spirit, but as Isaiah told us, we really can faithfully respond to God’s invitation to come by placing ourselves in a posture where we know God is most likely to show up,” she said. “Prayer, meditation on scripture, repentance, worship with other believers – these are like the train tracks down which God’s power comes. So friends, let’s be hopeful and expectant and faithful.”

She concluded, “Now in this time that remains for us together, let’s follow the psalmist’s call to rejoice and proclaim God’s faithfulness from generation to generation. Let us praise God, who is our trustworthy friend. God is committed to us, God longs to renew weary hearts, God wants to strengthen tired hands for service. Let’s respond to God’s invitations with a joyful and thankful yes, for the sake of God’s glory and for the sake of our

world. And who knows, we may find God moving in our lives and in our churches in ways that we could never have asked or imagined.”

Dave Toyce, ODT, a longtime member of Trinity and a former president of World Vision Canada, spoke about his upbringing in the Pentecostal tradition in the United States and how his desire to help others eventually led him to an Episcopal church that believed deeply in social justice and outreach.

Many of those who went up for Communion at the service also chose to be anointed with holy oil and receive a short prayer by a trained lay person. A prayer team was also stationed in the narthex for this purpose, and people watching online could text their prayer requests.

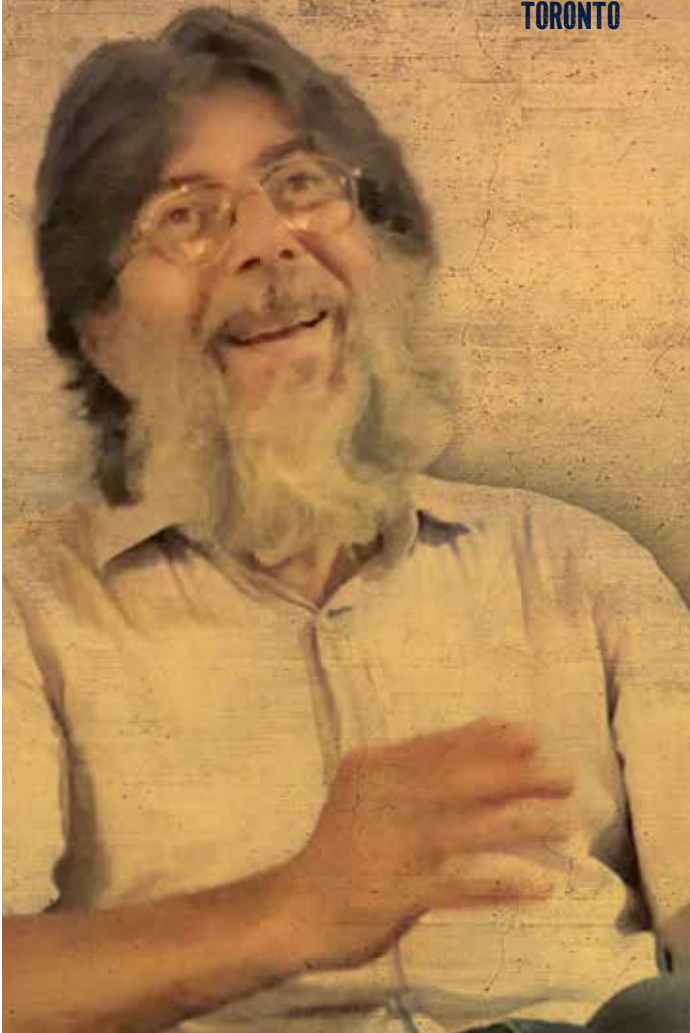
The service ended with a rousing version of the hymn “How Great Thou Art,” moving some in the congregation to tears. Afterwards, everyone went into the narthex and an adjoining room for food and refreshments.

The Lift Up Our Hearts service was one of five that are being held around the diocese this year as part of the Season of Spiritual Renewal, an effort to refresh the diocese as it emerges from the pandemic years. For more information about the services, see the ad on the back page of this issue of *The Anglican* or visit [www.toronto.anglican.ca/spiritualrenewal](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/spiritualrenewal).



**THE LORD  
COULD  
BE THAT  
HOMELESS  
GUY THAT  
YOU SEE.**

**ELIE  
ST. STEPHEN IN-THE-FIELDS  
TORONTO**



# THANK YOU!

**The Diocese of Toronto's annual FaithWorks campaign raised \$1,551,100 in 2024 in support of Anglican-affiliated ministries throughout the Diocese and around the world.**

## ELIE GETS IT!

*By Peter Mentis, FaithWorks Campaign Manager*

### **"The Lord could be that homeless guy that you see."**

Elie gets it! "I just wandered into the Church. I eventually decided to step up to the baptismal pool and be baptized because there was a story in the Bible about all those guys that had to go to the Lord's supper. But one guy said I'm too busy ... with this, too busy with that. So, I just had to step up to the baptismal pool and just go for it. And I haven't looked back since." Elie turns for support to St. Stephen in-the-Field's parish on College near Kensington Market in Toronto, a FaithWorks ministry partner. "I am unable to get my own house ... because there is limited funds." "I like to pray a lot ... so that the Lord can help me." "The problems are being dealt with by the Lord." "The Lord could be that homeless guy that you see."

Elie gets it! We are all created in God's image and likeness. This is the basis for the personal relationship we can each have with God. Jesus teaches us how to have a personal relationship with God. We are taught to love God with our whole being and our neighbour as ourselves. Jesus cares so much about every human being that he says, "I was hungry and you gave me food ... as you did it to one of the least of these

who are members of my family, you did it to me". (Matt. 25:35-40) He said this to teach us how to enter into the ultimate relationship with God by entering God's kingdom.

You, our donors and supporters, get it! You know that God's love is limitless and shared with all. You have put aside other cares and offered your time, talent and treasure to FaithWorks as a reflection of God's love for all, especially the most fragile and vulnerable among us. You see God's image in the people around you, even in "that homeless guy." You have loved and shared generously, without looking back.

**Thank you** for your support of FaithWorks. Each and every donation makes a difference, as each and every person impacted by FaithWorks matters.

**Thank you** to all our donors, large or small, new or ongoing, individual, parish, corporate or foundation. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers in parishes and at the Diocese. Thank you to our ministry partners who struggle to bring well-being and security to so many.

**Jesus taught us to experience our relationship with God by loving one another. Alleluia! You get it.**

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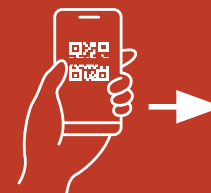
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### THANK YOU TO OUR PARISHES

As communities of compassion and hope, our parishes are the heart of the annual FaithWorks campaign. 89% of parishes participated in the 2024 campaign. Contributions from our parishes were \$866,500. Parishes retained \$101,146 for local outreach ministries. Grants to the Archdeaconries for outreach totaled \$43,650.

For more information or to donate, visit [www.faithworks.ca](http://www.faithworks.ca)



### THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY PARTNERS

Our FaithWorks Ministry Partners struggle tirelessly each and every day to share the transforming power of God's love with thousands of people in need. We thank our Ministry Partners for being powerful agents of the love that is changing lives and changing the world.

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I WAS NAKED  
AND YOU GAVE  
ME CLOTHING,  
I WAS SICK  
AND YOU TOOK  
CARE OF ME,  
I WAS IN  
PRISON AND  
YOU VISITED ME.

MATT. 25:35

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# Churches mark 1,700 years of Nicene Creed

## Events planned all year

BY DEBORAH ZIMMERMAN

**PARISHIONERS** of St. George Memorial, Oshawa were pleased to host the first in a series of events to celebrate the 1,700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed. The series, called the Festival of Faith, is being held by the Greater Toronto Christian Council of Churches, of which the diocese is a member.

Our neighbours from St. Gregory the Great Roman Catholic Church joined us in sponsoring this ecumenical event on Feb. 15, which involved teaching, reflection, prayer, small group discussions, refreshments and fellowship.

Our incumbent, the Rev. Dr. Alvarado Adderley, welcomed everyone, including visiting clergy, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, and led us through the morning's agenda. Father Marijan Sisko of St. Gregory's summarized and reviewed the history of the Nicene Creed and summarized its message of unity that we continue to proclaim as Christians. We were reminded of the treasure this document has been, and continues to be, for so many centuries.

In our discussion groups, we considered the implications of the creed on various facets of our Christian lives today in our own specific

situations. Attendees from various parishes, as well as our own, came away inspired and with a renewed sense of respect for the essence of our faith as embodied in the words of the Nicene Creed. Thanks to all who shared in making this event successful.

As we at St. George's continue to encourage each other in spiritual renewal and sharing our faith, Father Alvarado began a teaching series during Sunday services for Lent. His first topic was a clear explication of the Nicene and Apostle's Creed.

Thanks to the Rev. Canon Philip Hobson, the diocese's ecumenical officer, for inviting us to be the first parish in the Diocese of Toronto to celebrate the Festival of Faith for Christian Unity 2025. We look forward to sharing in future events around the diocese.

*Deborah Zimmerman is a member of St. George Memorial, Oshawa. For more information on the Festival of Faith, including a Quiet Day planned by the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine in November, contact the Rev. Canon Philip Hobson, the diocese's ecumenical officer, at [phobson@icloud.com](mailto:phobson@icloud.com).*



Clergy and laity gather at St. George Memorial, Oshawa for the first event in the Festival of Faith series. PHOTO BY SHELLEY KOSSATZ



### HONOURED

The Rev. Canon Joan Cavanaugh-Clark (centre), incumbent of the Parish of Minden-Kinmount, receives the King Charles III Coronation Medal, awarded for exemplary contributions to the community. Canon Cavanaugh-Clark has been a tireless supporter of those in need, starting a thrift shop and caring for people wherever she can. Joining her are, from left, the Rev. Canon Ted McCollum, Andrew Hodson, the Rev. Martha Waind and MP Jamie Schmale, who presented the award. Richard Schell, a parishioner, also received the award. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PARISH OF MINDEN-KINMOUNT



### WARM RESPONSE

The Rev Louise Dightam (in red jacket) and the team from St. Barnabas, Chester take part in the Toronto-Danforth Coldest Night of the Year walk in February, raising \$1,700 for Kennedy House youth shelter. More than \$30,000 was raised by participants in the walk. The Coldest Night of the Year is an annual event held across Canada by churches and other groups to raise funds for organizations helping people in need. PHOTO BY THE REV LOUISE DIGTAM



**EXEMPLARY SERVICE**

The Rev. Canon Gregory Carpenter (second from right), incumbent of St. Jude, Wexford, receives the King Charles III Coronation Medal from MP Salma Zahid at a civic ceremony in January. The award is for exemplary service to the community. Canon Carpenter has been a member of the Interfaith Council for Scarborough Centre since 2016, co-hosting multiple Iftar dinners during Ramadan. His focus on outreach has expanded the scope of the church's food bank, and St. Jude's hosted vaccination clinics during the pandemic. With Canon Carpenter and Ms. Zahid are, from left, churchwardens Sharon Fiennes-Clinton and Hugo McIntosh, Canon Carpenter's mother Bev Carpenter, and churchwarden Monique Hodge. PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. JUDE, WEXFORD

**SPECIAL VISITOR**

The Rev. Lorna May of St. Luke, Creemore (middle) and volunteers welcome MP Terry Dowdall (right) during his first visit to the St. Luke's Community Food Bank, housed at the church, in March. The food bank has supported local families since 2022 with a focus on balanced meals with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Deacon May says the need for an enhanced support network is growing, exacerbated by high housing costs and grocery prices. Food is also donated weekly to four schools in the area for the snack program. Pictured with Deacon May and Mr. Dowdall are, from left, Ross Lotto, Sheila Koss and Susan Prosser. PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. LUKE, CREEMORE



**Bob Marley mass strikes a chord**

St. James Cathedral observed the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in March with the first-ever Marley Mass. More than 300 people attended in person with another 650 viewing the livestream.

The service, composed by the Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields, the cathedral's vicar and sub-dean, was inspired by the theological perspectives and lyrics of the reggae superstar. It included some of Bob Marley's songs, played by a Toronto reggae band.

In his homily, Canon Fields told the congregation that he was sure that none of them had ever imagined that they would have lived long enough to hear Mr. Marley's music performed in an Anglican church such as the cathedral.

"That's because we grew up in a world bound by the chains that Bob Nesta Marley spoke and sang about, chains that not only bound our hands and feet but shackled our minds and held us captive. And today, still do so," he said.

He described Mr. Marley, who died in 1981, as a prophet of the oppressed. "His songs echo the cries of the oppressed, the call to unity and the hope for liberation. He challenges us to see God not as a distant observer but as an active force in the struggle for justice. He invites us to embody love that is bold, transformative and inclusive. Marley's theology is a call to action – a reminder that faith is not passive but revolutionary. It calls us to resist the 'Babylon system,' to stand with the oppressed and to believe in a God who is not only

with us but within us."

He said Mr. Marley's legacy invites people to ask: "How does our faith challenge the oppressive systems of today? How do we live out a love that seeks justice? How can we, as individuals and communities, participate in the liberation that Marley envisioned and that God desires? In answering these questions, we move beyond simply appreciating his music to embodying its message."

The service included a response by Brainerd Blyden-Taylor, founder and artistic director of the Nathaniel Dett Chorale. He reflected on the way Mr. Marley's music continues to speak to the body, mind, soul and aspirations of the oppressed and underprivileged. He showed that Mr. Marley's music is a direct descendant of the Spiritual genre that spoke to the lives of Black people who faced oppression.

Joan Pierre, former executive director of Caribana, expressed her satisfaction with the celebration. "What an evening of pure joy and blessings," she said. "St. James Cathedral was packed and everyone left filled with love. What a gift Bob Marley left us all!"

Dean Stephen Hance of the cathedral said, "We were so excited to see the level of participation in the Marley Mass, in person and online, following the success of the Leonard Cohen Eucharist last year. Clearly many people are open to a worship experience which engages with music and the arts in a creative way, and St. James Cathedral will offer these from time to time." Staff

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## Communion Forest **1** takes root

HAMILTON - The 419 trees planted in the Diocese of Niagara last fall for the Communion Forest are experiencing their first spring. The deciduous and coniferous trees are in four parishes that were selected for planting.

The Communion Forest is a global initiative within the Anglican Communion focused on tree growing, ecosystem conservation, protection, and restoration as a practical, spiritual, and symbolic response to the environmental crisis. It is a Christian hope for the well-being of humanity and creation.

With a \$7,500 grant from the Anglican Foundation and matching funds by the Diocese of Niagara, Climate Justice Niagara was able to hire Green Venture to assist with the implementation of the initiative.

Initially, 23 parishes completed the survey used for the selection process. Based on elements like water access and number of volunteers, 13 parishes ended up moving to the next step, which involved completing a tree inventory on parish property. In the end, four parishes were chosen to move ahead to plant a variety of trees before the end of last November.

The first to plant was St. Paul's, an urban parish that identified a gap on the west side of the building for four beautiful trees. St. David, Welland had the perfect spot to plant a special tree for its 75th anniversary. St. John, Nelson had room to plant 14 trees. With advice from Green Venture, it chose a mixture of seedlings: red maples, sugar maples, balsam firs, and white pines. The parish volunteers received extra help from the Rainbow Kings and Queens, a diocesan group that supports LGBTQ2 refugees from African countries with homophobic policies. St. Paul, Caledonia planted a mini-forest, a mix of 400 trees planted in a 10-metre square. The forest includes black maple, red maple and yellow birch.

Climate Justice Niagara is currently looking for other grant opportunities to continue tree planting in the communities within the diocese.

*The Niagara Anglican*

## Coffee Girls help **2** those in need

FREDERICTON - The Woodstock Coffee Girls got their start because their rector, the Rev. Maria Shepherdson, made a Facebook post about something that began more than a decade ago.

In 2013, John Sweeney, a plumber from Ireland, started a Facebook page called Suspended Coffees. His message was simple: Buy a cup of coffee for a stranger, because an act of kindness can change a life.

Eight hours later, the page had attracted more than 20,000 likes.

Suspended coffee, or "caffè sospeso," is a tradition that comes from Naples, Italy, where when customers buy coffee, they also pay in advance for a cup to be given to somebody else – usually someone who otherwise couldn't afford it.

"Jill Craig and Jennifer Taylor became enthusiastic organizers of our own suspended coffee program," says Ms. Shepherdson, incumbent of the Parish of Woodstock, which includes the churches of St. Luke's and Christ Church.

"We went a step further and partnered with Tim Hortons, our neighbour across



the street from St. Luke's, to offer a hot drink and food to our local folk in need of some kindness, and a place to be indoors as legitimate customers during the fall and winter months."

That was last fall. They told fellow parishioners in the parish of the plan to pay for a simple coffee and snack, and set up a donation box at the back of the church.

"All we did was share through the parish that we were starting this initiative," says Ms. Craig. "People have been very generous."

At first, they bought gift cards for Tims and had the staff there give them out to those likely to need them. But that was a bit cumbersome for the staff and embarrassing for the recipients, so they came up with another plan.

Both Ms. Craig and Ms. Taylor have volunteer and professional connections with those who work with people seeking assistance. In particular, they approached the Regional Resiliency Project, which works one-on-one with people in precarious situations.

This group has identified four people in town as being unhoused, four more with no income and many more who cannot feed their families.

"I contacted a friend who had connections with two outreach workers," says Ms. Taylor. "They talk to people, so the cards go to these people."

Now the outreach workers have the gift cards and give them out as needed.

"Dignity matters in any undertaking of this nature, and we wanted to ensure that

rather than having to go and ask, those most in need had a Tim Hortons prepaid card worth \$10 to use as they wished," says Ms. Shepherdson.

It's all done with receipts, so each group knows exactly what has been bought and given out. To date, since last fall, more than \$900 has been raised, meaning 90 \$10 gift cards – enough for a coffee, soup and a donut – have been purchased and given out.

One benefit of the cards is if a person doesn't use all \$10, the balance is still there for them to use next time.

The next phase of the project is underway. There is a significant need for underwear, socks and warm undershirts amongst those the coffee project has supported, so the parish has just launched Bloomers and Long Johns, placing a box at the back of the church for those who need clothing.

There used to be three churches on the downtown stretch of Main Street. "We're the only church on the street now," said Ms. Craig. "We want to be seen as the place you can come to freely, and we're doing what we can to help the community."

*The New Brunswick Anglican*

## Partnership saves church **3**

HALIFAX - A north end Halifax church is crediting its partnership with a high-rise apartment building developer for preserving its history.

St. Mark's, located at the corner of Got-

tingen Street and Russell Street, has been operating since 1866. "St. Mark's was in a situation where we were running out of money and we are not a huge congregation and we weren't sure what our future was going to look like," says the Rev. Tammy Hodge Orovec, incumbent.

If it wasn't for the partnership with the developer, the church would cease to exist, she says. "Through some ingenuity and hard work from some very faithful people here at St. Mark's, they found a partner, someone who was willing to buy our property so they could redevelop it but were also able to preserve the church and help us to live into the future."

The developer bought the land owned by the church and will build a 10-storey high-rise apartment building. It also plans to revive the church and make it more energy efficient.

The developer is leaving creative control of the sanctuary and worship space up to the church. The church hall and a late addition to the church will be torn down but the basement will be completely renovated and the church will get a professional kitchen, banquet space and possibly space for offices and meetings for the congregation and the wider community.

The church has a special history in the community. It is the last remaining north-end church that existed prior to the Halifax explosion. "Hopefully we can become a real community hub for the north end," says Ms. Hodge Orovec.

*CTV News*

# A tip of the hat to seafarers



BY THE REV. JUDITH ALLTREE

For the past 164 years, a little-known ceremony takes place on board the first ship to arrive in the Port of Toronto. It's called the Top Hat Ceremony. When the first ocean-going vessel, referred to as a "Saltie," arrives in port, a representative of PortsToronto (or back in the day, the Toronto Port Authority) greets the captain of the vessel with a top hat, a briefcase and \$100. If there was ever a reason to rush a ship to Toronto in 2025, a top hat and \$100 is not it!

However, in 1861, the first time the port authority decided to hold this event, a silk top hat was a pretty big deal, because it was the key to the city: for 24 hours the captain and crew could eat and drink for free! And the \$100 bonus in the briefcase was about a month's salary for the captain, perhaps worth as much as \$5,000 today.

On March 28, however, the hat was held above Captain Sergei's head, as it's over 200 years old now. The briefcase cost more than the \$100 it contained, but the gesture was greatly appreciated! And we at the Mission to Seafarers brought gift bags for all the seafarers on board as a welcome-to-Toronto treat.

The rough seas added a week to the ship's transit from San Sebastian, Brazil, where Captain Sergei and his crew picked up more than 19,000 metric tonnes of sugar to deliver to the Redpath Sugar Refinery at the foot of Jarvis Street in Toronto. After it's been refined, the sugar will find its way to various factories and stores around Ontario – and ultimately

to our homes in one form or another. And the seafarers will, once again, have ensured that a delivery of something important and precious that we don't grow anywhere in our country has arrived safely on our doorsteps.

By weight, 90 per cent of everything that arrives in our country comes by way of ship. The kinds of goods we receive today haven't change appreciably since 1861: the construction materials we need to keep our ever-expanding city and province growing; and the food items that don't grow locally, such as coffee, tea and sugar, to name only a few. In 1861, bolts of cloth such as wool, linen and cotton would arrive. More often these days, the finished garments by the container-full find their way here from various countries such as China, India, the Philippines and Thailand.

And the seafarers continue to sacrifice so much of their lives to ensure the safe arrival of all these and many more products, living apart from their families and loved ones because in spite of the low pay at sea, it is still better pay than they would make in their countries of origin such as Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia. And this pay usually supports not just their immediate families but their extended families as well. Remittance payments often make up a huge percentage of the GDP of these countries.

But what can make up for the time the seafarers are away, putting the health and happiness of others always ahead of themselves? Knowing that they are not forgotten, that they are not invisible, that we on land appreciate their sacrifice and the danger of their work. "The Ministry



The Rev. Judith Alltree brings gift bags to some of the crew of the first ocean-going ship to arrive in Toronto harbour this year. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS

of Small Gestures" is how the work of the Mission to Seafarers is described; small gestures indeed, compared with the huge gesture of the seafarers. We get to go to our homes and families after our shifts but shift's end for them sends them alone to a small room with a small bunk on a large ship that makes noise day after day. Not to mention bouncing around on an ocean.

So the gift of a small bag of treats that includes warm hats and scarves, and yes, even chocolates, is warmly welcomed – more kudos to our team of wonderful volunteer knitters from around the province! Even a small gesture has great meaning. And the bigger gestures of the work we do – the Happiness Index, the Ship Visiting App and the Happy@Sea app – help us

to provide the things that seafarers need to make their lives better while at sea.

As the 2025 shipping season begins on the Great Lakes, as you drink that first cup of coffee in the morning or your last cup of hot chocolate in the evening, remember the seafarers who made sure you had that cup to brighten your day. And find a way to thank them for their sacrifice for us.

*The Rev. Judith Alltree is the recently retired regional director of the Mission to Seafarers Canada. She is the current vice-chair of the Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario and the Port Chaplain for the various departments that make up the Port of Toronto. To make a donation through CanadaHelps, visit [www.mtsso.org](http://www.mtsso.org).*

# Speaking about the Bishop's Company

## THE STEWARD

BY PETER MISIASZEK



Seldom do I get an opportunity to speak to a parish fellowship group about the campaigns of the stewardship office. Most often, I'm invited to preach on a Sunday or speak to a leadership team about church growth statistics, demographics and how stewardship education can have a positive impact on funding ministry. So when Doug Hart from the Connect Men dinner and discussion group at St. John, York Mills invited me to speak in early March, I jumped at the opportunity.

First, I beguiled them with my presentation on charting growth in the Diocese of Toronto. For over a decade, I've made an annual presentation to Synod Council on how demographics, faith identification, giving patterns and attendance are impacting the Christian experience in our diocese. Typically, the news has been less than encouraging – that is, until the pandemic hit and attendance and giving patterns were jolted in a positive direction thanks to a spike in online worship.

The audience of 25 souls was most fascinated by the transition in faith adherence



Guests at last year's Bishop's Company Dinner. PHOTO BY MOON CREATIVE HOUSE

since the mid-1960s and the growth of the so-called "nones." Those with no faith affiliation now comprise 33 per cent of the Canadian population, according to our latest census (c. 2021) and is the fastest growing component of identifiers (if you can use that word).

What I really wanted to share with the group is the impact of the Bishop's Company. After all, the first presentation was supposed to be the side show. The original

intent of the invitation was to showcase the work of our fund to assist clergy in need.

Each year, our bishops receive numerous requests for help. Some may be small, like travel assistance to a conference or help with paying for an online theology course. Others are not so small: counseling, dental reconstructive surgery, and speech and occupational therapy for children. Most years we get over \$100,000 in

requests. All of this is funded outside the operating budget of the diocese. It's not covered by parish allotment; not a penny.

For 64 years, the Bishop's Company has hosted an annual fundraising dinner. It has proven to be an important fundraising event in the diocese, generating over \$5 million since its inception. It was at this point that I asked the men at St. John, York Mills if they would sponsor a table or two for our event on Oct. 17, and they happily obliged.

The Bishop's Company has provided financial support to Indigenous programs and stipendiary assistant for clergy. It provides annual bursaries for theological students and postulants and a purse to clergy widows at Christmas, and it gave seed funding for our employee assistance program.

I am grateful for the work of the Bishop's Company in supporting our clergy and their families who are in need. The work our clergy do is significant, and often their struggles come from a place of real vulnerability.

I would be happy to repeat my presentation 10 times over to any fellowship group in the diocese that is interested. But you're going to get the sales pitch as well. Invite me anyway, as I love speaking about the important ministry that goes on in the Church and across our diocese.

*Peter Misiaszek is the diocese's director of Stewardship Development.*

# A vivid snapshot from a troubling time

*Encampment: Resistance, Grace and an Unhoused Community.* By Maggie Helwig, May 2025. ISBN 9781552455043, e-ISBN 9781770568426, 200 pp, \$24.95.

BY STUART MANN

I didn't intend to review this book. Knowing almost nothing about the encampments of unhoused people that are springing up in towns and cities across Ontario, I thought I should find someone else to write it, someone qualified.

But then some tents and tiny homes moved into the park beside the Synod Office, where I work, and I began to ask myself some questions. Who are these people? Where do they come from? Why are they sleeping outside? And most pressingly, how do they make it through the winter?

So I began to read *Encampment*, just to see if it would provide me with some answers, and I'm really glad I did because it gave me so much more.

The story revolves around the encampment at St. Stephen in-the-Fields church in Kensington Market in Toronto and the efforts of its priest, the Rev. Canon Maggie Helwig, and her colleagues to look after, defend and advocate for the people who called the place home. The encampment lasted from about 2022 to 2024, when the City finally tore most of it down, encircled the ground with a tall fence and put concrete blocks inside it.

"I am writing this because I want you to understand my world, the world I live in, and the world I live alongside," writes Canon Helwig at the beginning of the book. A little further on she writes, "This is one story, flawed and incomplete, of people who have been trying to look after each other in very hard times, and some of the ways in which we have been changed."

Canon Helwig lives in and alongside worlds that most of us could scarcely imagine. Ministering to an encampment and its inhabitants is hard, grinding work. It is a world of non-stop need, of

exhausting battles with bureaucracy, of endless loss, of disappearance and death, of angry neighbours and apathetic officials, of harassment and humiliation, of heartbreaking vulnerability.

Indeed, it would be almost impossible to read this book if it weren't for the fact that Canon Helwig is a natural storyteller who effortlessly weaves the various threads of her worlds into a rich, compelling tapestry. She is a candid and surprisingly non-judgmental writer. She also has a wonderfully dry sense of humour with an eye for the comical and absurd – a precious asset for a book such as this.

And she's entirely at home in the worlds she writes about. "I have never been much more than a tourist in the land of the well," she writes. "And probably I should have been more patient, and I should have been more understanding. But the land of affliction is, one way and another, my home."

Wisely, she doesn't try to write a step-by-step account of the encampment at St. Stephen's and its eventual and inevitable destruction – the media did a pretty good job of that. Rather, she tells the story of those strange and trying years through the stories of the people who lived there, stories that she was given either formally or through long relationships. "I have a profound responsibility to these stories, a responsibility to tell them, and to tell them as truly as I can," she writes.

We learn about Chaz the Agent of Chaos, about Douglas and Robin and Isaac, about Jeff and his dog Taurus, about Pirate and the Artist. We learn about the Jane and John Does who come and go and the unnamed girl who died of an overdose beside the church. It's not a pretty picture but it's endlessly fascinating. These people keep going despite unbelievable odds against them. They are tenacious and fragile, difficult and loveable, hyper-vigilant and too trusting. They are creative and funny, exasperating and argumentative. They just want to live in peace like everyone else. Most of



The Rev. Canon Maggie Helwig stands in the encampment in 2022. Her new book (right) tells the story of the encampment and the struggle to keep it open. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

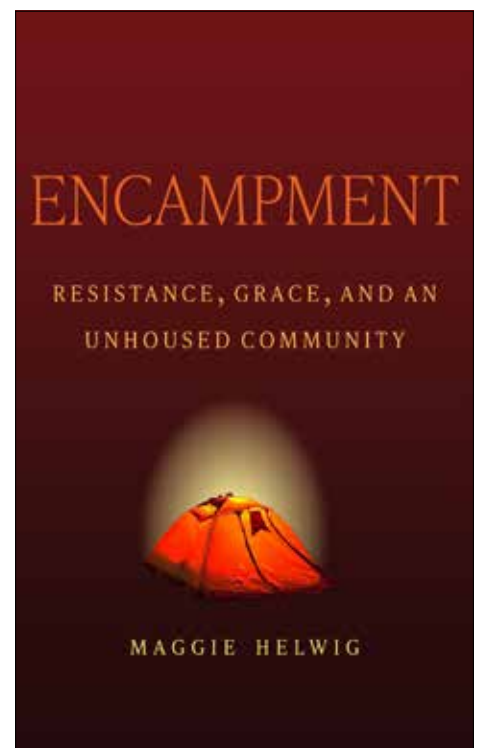
all, they want to belong somewhere.

As Canon Helwig writes, they're pretty much the same as the rest of us, except we get to hide it all behind walls.

To her credit, Canon Helwig doesn't demonize the folks on the other side of the great divide – the city staffers who suddenly show up and frighten everyone, the bylaw enforcement officers serving notice after notice, the jaded bureaucrats, the bogus neighbourhood improvement groups calling for change, the local councillor, the right-wing political candidate who shows up to make a speech, Mayor John Tory, the police and firefighters, the principal and parents of the local Montessori school. Even the Claw, the monstrous machine that the City uses to pluck up tents, tarps, plastic wraps, sleeping bags, boarding and anything else people use to shelter themselves in encampments.

If it wasn't so tragic, the whole thing would be a farce. And it's not going to end anytime soon, writes Canon Helwig. As the fight for resources intensifies and the social fabric continues to unravel, there will be more encampments, more unhoused people, more confrontations, more Claws.

But she's not without hope. Interspersed throughout the story are passages of scripture, quotes from a book by Archbishop Rowan Williams and excerpts from her own sermons given during that time. Her faith is steadfast. Her strength and inspiration is Jesus. "We must love," she writes. "We must love among the hate and the injustice,



among the ruins, we must love those who do nothing to earn our love..."

There are two other aspects of this book that make it worth reading. One is that it provides a rare glimpse into an inner-city parish that is trying to operate in the most challenging of circumstances. The other is that it touches on one of the strangest times in Toronto's history, from about 2014 to 2024, a decade that included searing heat, orange skies, woodsmoke, a serial killer in the Gay Village, social distancing, masks, COVID-19 and the commodification of housing. It is a vivid snapshot of our recent past, whether we like it or not.



The encampment outside St. Stephen in-the-Fields in Kensington Market in Toronto in 2022. It was torn down by the City two years later. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

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## LOOKING AHEAD

To submit items for Looking Ahead, email editor@toronto.anglican.ca. The deadline for the June issue is May 1. Parishes can also promote their events on the diocese's website Calendar at www.toronto.anglican.ca.

**MAY 2 & 3** - Monks' Cell, a dining experience fundraiser, at St. Theodore of Canterbury, 111 Cactus Ave., Toronto. Dine on open-hearth charcoal grilled steak or chicken served by costumed wait staff in a setting reminiscent of a medieval dining hall. Licensed. Order your meat preference and wine with your reservation. \$50 per person. Wine selection \$15 per bottle. Reservations open April 6 online at monkscell@hotmail.com or call 647-393-1391. The Monks' Cell will be open on May 2 from 6-10 p.m. and on May 3 from 5-10 p.m.

**MAY 3** - St. Cuthbert, Leaside Spring Fair, 11a.m. to 2 p.m., with baking and preserves, books, barbecue, jewelry, toys and more, 1399 Bayview Ave., Toronto.

**MAY 4** - Musicfest 2025, a concert with handbells, chimes, band and soloists, 3 p.m., St. John, York Mills, 19 Don Ridge Dr., Toronto. Fully accessible with free parking or an uphill walk from the York Mills subway station. Admission is free, however a freewill offering will be collected for charities, including Sleeping Children Around the World. For more information, call 416-225-6611 or visit www.SJYM.ca.

**MAY 10** - Welsh Male Voice Choir, 3-5 p.m., Church of Our Saviour, 1 Laurentide Dr., Don Mills. Advance tickets, \$40; at the door, \$45. For tickets, contact the church during office hours at 416-385-1805,

Tuesdays and Fridays, noon to 4 p.m., or text Elizabeth Liness at 905-621-9205.

**MAY 11** - Coronation Evensong for King Charles III (BCP) at 4 p.m., followed by a feature on Words and Music for Royal Occasions with St. Olave's Arts Guild, coordinated by Donna Morrison-Reed, St. Olave, Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue.

**MAY 24** - Marking 10 years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada presented its 94 Calls of Action, a gathering will be held to reflect on reconciliation with Indigenous people, to learn about the progress in living out the Calls to Action and to take practical steps in support of the Calls to Action. Speakers will include Douglas Sanderson of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in Manitoba and a University of Toronto law professor who is the Visiting Indigenous Scholar at Redeemer; Douglas Sinclair of the Peguis First Nation of Manitoba and publisher of the Indigenous Watchdog, and the Ven. Rosalyn Kantlaht'ant Elm, chaplain from Six Nations and director of Indigenous Ministries, Anglican Church of Canada. The symposium will be held at 12 p.m. at Redeemer, Bloor Street in Toronto. To register, go to <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/nz55rxj>.

**MAY 25** - Music at St. Matthew's presents Poetry & Force with local Etobicoke virtuosi Anton Yeretsky (violin) and Maria Dolnycky (piano) performing a diverse array of works, including a premiere piece by Tyler Versluis, 2:30 p.m., St. Matthew, 3962 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke. Pay what you can (\$20 suggested). For more info, visit [www.saintmatts.ca](http://www.saintmatts.ca) or call 416-231-4014.

**MAY 25** - Rock Eucharist: The music of The Grateful Dead, 7 p.m., Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street and Avenue Road, Toronto.

**MAY 29** - Holy Communion for Ascension Day (BCP) at 6 p.m., fol-

lowed by a light supper, then at 7 p.m., the Very Rev. Chris Dow will present an illustrated feature talk about his recent time in the Arctic, St. Olave, Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue.

**MAY 31** - Lift Up Our Hearts, a special service of spiritual renewal for all Anglicans in the diocese, 2 p.m., All Saints, Whitby. The Rev. Gerlyn Henry to preach. The service will include music, a lay witness talk, an opportunity for prayer and anointing and a reception with delicious food afterwards.

### PRAYER CYCLE

#### FOR MAY

1. St. Mark, Port Hope
2. St. Paul, Brighton
3. St. Paul, Perrytown
4. New Curates of the Diocese of Toronto
5. St. Peter, Cobourg
6. St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope
7. St. Saviour, Orono
8. Christ Church, Scarborough
9. Grace Church in Scarborough
10. Holy Trinity, Guildwood
11. Theological Education / Vocations for Ministry
12. Wycliffe College
13. Trinity College
14. The Postulancy Committee
15. Holy Wisdom
16. Nativity, Malvern
17. New Hope Anglican Mission
18. Scarborough Deanery
19. St. Andrew, Scarborough
20. St. Dunstan of Canterbury
21. St. Jude, Wexford
22. St. Margaret in-the-Pines
23. St. Margaret Tamil Congregation
24. St. Michael the Archangel
25. Bishop Kevin Robertson, Suffragan Bishop
26. The Clergy of the Diocese
27. St. Paul, L'Amoreaux
28. St. Timothy, Agincourt
29. Ascension Day
30. All Saints, Whitby
31. The Season of Spiritual Renewal

### IN MOTION

#### Appointments

- The Ven. John Anderson, Incumbent of the Huronia Regionalization parishes: St. Athanasius, Orillia, St. David Anglican-Lutheran Church, Orillia, St. George, Fairvalley, St. James, Orillia, St. John, Waverley and the Parish of Washago-Price's Corners, March 1.
- The Rev. Don Davidson, Priest-in-Charge, Christ Church, Bolton, April 1.
- Tiffany Robinson, Assistant Curate, St. Paul, Bloor Street, May 5.
- The Rev. Andrew Johnson, Priest-in-Charge, St. John, Willowdale, Aug. 1.

#### Vacant Incumbencies

Clergy from outside the diocese with the permission of their bishop may apply through the Diocesan Executive Assistant, Canon Mary Conliffe.

#### Bishop's Direct Appointment Process

- (receiving names):
- Parish of Campbellford, Hastings and Roseneath
- Christ Memorial, Oshawa
- Parish of Churchill and Cookstown
- Redeemer, Bloor Street (associate priest)
- Parish of Campbellford, Hastings and Roseneath
- Parish of Fenelon Falls and Coboconk
- St. Paul, Uxbridge
- St. Mark, Midland
- St. John, York Mills - Associate Priest
- Parish of Penetanguishene and Waubaushene

#### Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving names): N/A

Second Phase - (receiving names via Bishop): N/A

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names):

- Christ Church, Brampton
- St. George on-the-Hill

#### Other Process

- Huronia Regional Ministry (Associate Priest). Contact Bishop Riscylla Shaw.
- Trinity College Humphrys Chaplain. Contact Canon Mary Conliffe.

#### Ordinations

The following individuals will be ordained transitional deacons at St. James Cathedral on May 4 at 4:30 p.m.:

- Michael Brain
- Denise Byard
- Rajini Lyman
- Tiffany Robinson

The following individuals will be ordained deacons at San Lorenzo-Dufferin on June 1 at 1 p.m.:

- Monica Bustamante
- Juan Iglesias
- Marco Suarez

#### Celebrations of New Ministry

- The Rev. Douglas Barnes, Priest-in-Charge, St. Thomas, Brooklin, May 3 at 11 a.m.
- Sister Elizabeth Ann Eckert, eighth Reverend Mother of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, May 6 at 11:30 a.m. in St. John's Convent chapel. Sister Elizabeth Ann Eckert succeeds Sister Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, who has completed her 10-year term of office. If attending the service in person, please RSVP to [guesthouse@ssjd.ca](mailto:guesthouse@ssjd.ca) by April 30.
- The Rev. Susan Spicer, Priest-in-Charge, St. John, Ida, May 8 at 7 p.m.

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# LIFT UP OUR HEARTS

Saturday afternoons at 2 p.m.

**MARCH  
22**

## **St. James Cathedral**

The Rev. Molly Finlay, preacher

**MARCH  
29**

## **Trinity Church Streetsville**

The Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas, preacher

**MAY  
31**

## **All Saints, Whitby**

The Rev. Gerlyn Henry, preacher

**SEPT  
27**

## **St. James, Orillia**

The Rev. Dr. Rob Hurkmans, preacher

**OCT  
25**

## **St. Paul's Bloor Street**

The Rev. Dr. Alvarado Adderley, preacher

Come together as the Diocese of Toronto to **worship God** in wonderful music, inspirational preaching and the witness of God's people.

